CLAIMS

1. An apparatus for dispensing and tensioning wire from a coil, the apparatus comprising a frame (1) for attaching to a vehicle, means (19) for mounting at least one coil of wire for rotation, a lever arm member (21) pivotally mounted with respect to the frame and having a guide (31) co-operable with the wire in use, and a play-out path for the wire defined between an abutment (13) of the frame and an abutment (33) carried by the lever arm member, the lever arm having a first operative position in which the respective abutments are spaced apart to allow play-out of the wire around said guide, and the lever arm having a second operative position in which it is moveable pivotably about said pivot point to cause wire to be trapped between the respective abutments.

2. An apparatus as claimed in claim 1 wherein the wire mounting means (19) is carried by the frame (1).

3. An apparatus as claimed in claim 1 or claim 2 wherein the lever arm (21) is held in its first operative position by a locking member (39) engageable between it and the frame, disengagement of the locking member enabling the lever arm to obtain its second operative position.

4. An apparatus as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 3 wherein the abutment (13) carried by the frame is a fixed abutment and the abutment (33) carried by the lever arm is a moveable abutment.

5. An apparatus as claimed in claim 4 wherein two spaced apart fixed abutments (13, 13') are provided with the moveable abutment (33) of the lever arm being disposed therebetween, the moveable abutment being

pivotal to co-operate with one or other of the frame abutments depending upon whether the vehicle is to be operated in the forward or backward direction.

6. An apparatus as claimed in claim 4 wherein two spaced apart moveable abutments (33a, 33b) are provided carried by the lever arm with a fixed abutment (13') disposed therebetween carried by the frame.

7. An apparatus as claimed in claim 6 wherein the lever arm has a bifurcated end.

8. An apparatus as claimed in any one of the preceding claims wherein the guide (27) is disposed to one side of the pivot point (35) and the abutment (33) of the lever arm member is disposed to the opposite side of the pivot point of the lever arm member.

9. An apparatus as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 7 wherein the guide (27) and the abutment (33) of the lever arm member are disposed in spaced apart relation but to one and the same side of the pivot point.

10. An apparatus as claimed in claim 9 wherein the wire is threaded appropriately to one side or the other of the abutment according to the intended direction of movement to tension the wire in the second operative position of the lever arm.

11. An apparatus as claimed in claim 8, 9 or 10 wherein the abutment (33) of the lever arm is located closer to the pivot point (35) than the guide (27).

12. An apparatus as claimed in any one of the preceding claims wherein the guide (27) and abutments (13,33) extend upwardly from a lower frame member (5, 25) of the frame or the lever arm.

13. An apparatus as claimed in claim 12 wherein the guide and abutments extend vertically upwardly and/or perpendicularly to the lower frame member or lever arm.

14. An apparatus as claimed in any one of the preceding claims wherein the lever arm (21) comprises two substantially parallel arm members (23, 25) connected by the at least one abutment (33) and the guide (27).

15. An apparatus as claimed in any one of the preceding claims wherein the guide (27) is of circular cross section.

16. An apparatus as claimed in any one of the preceding claims further comprising a lower guide (29) extending beyond the aforesaid guide (27) to prevent wire from slipping off the guide.

17. An apparatus as claimed in claim 16 wherein the guide comprises a pair of spaced guide members defining a further play-out path for the wire.

18. An apparatus as claimed in any one of the preceding claims wherein the pivot axis (35) for the lever arm (21) is in a vertical plane.

19. An apparatus as claimed in any one of the preceding claims wherein the abutments (13, 33) and guide or guides (27) are parallel to the pivot axis (35).

20. An apparatus as claimed in any one of the preceding claims wherein the frame (1) comprises upper and lower members (3, 5) connected by inter-connecting members (7, 9, 11, 13) at least one of which comprises the frame abutment (13).

21. An apparatus as claimed in any one of the preceding claims wherein, in use, the lever arm (21) is arranged to extend to one side of the frame so

as to position the play-out guide to one side of the vehicle to which the apparatus is attached.

22. An apparatus as claimed in any one of the preceding claims wherein the pivot connection between the lever arm member (21) and the frame (1) is readily releasable to allow the lever arm member to be re-positioned into a non-operative transport position.

23. A method of installing wire fencing using an apparatus as claimed in any one of the preceding claims, the method comprising mounting the apparatus on a vehicle, mounting at least one coil of wire on the apparatus and threading the wire through the play-out path with the lever arm locked in its first operative position, the free end of the wire being secured to a post, the method further comprising moving the vehicle in a desired direction and a desired distance causing wire to play-out from the coil and then causing the lever arm member to adopt its second operative position and moving the vehicle further in the chosen direction by sufficient distance to actuate the clamp action of the lever arm to inhibit play-out of wire from the coil, and thereafter continuing to move the vehicle to tension the length of wire to a sufficient degree, providing one or more securing posts for the wire and securing the wire to the one or more of the posts to maintain the tension therein.